RAJYA SABHA

Tuesday, the 25th November, 1997/ Agrahayana 4, 1919 (Saka)

The House met at Eleven of the Clock;

Mr. Chairman in the Chair

Announcement by the Chairman

श्री एस०एस० अहलुवालिया (बिहार): सभापति महोदय ....**(व्यवधान)**....

श्री सुरिन्दर कुमार सिंगला (पंजाब): सर, मुझे लगता है ....**(व्यवधान)**....

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Members: all of you, please sit down. (*Interruptionns*). Please sit down (*Interruptionns*). Please, let me speak.

Hon. Members: this House has a Constitutional revising and counselling role and, therefore, it is a continuing House. It is meant to exercise a sobering influence when there is turbulence in the political waters.

I am confident, hon. Members of all parties, groups and independents have a deep and abiding interest in playing their duly mandated role in upholding the spirit of the Constitution.

We have to be very cautious and circumspect in the use of our language and temper. The disorderly happenings in the House and its inability to function weaken the Parliamentary institutions, democracy and the rule of law.

I, therefore, regretfully adjourn the House for the day to allow time for reflection.

Thank you.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO STARRED QUESTIONS

Narcotics Trade in Delhi

*81. SHRI S. MUTHU MANI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whetherr it is a fact that the Narcotics trade in Delhi has risen rapidly;

(b) whether it is also a fact that about 25 to 30 kg of herioin is entering the naitonal capital every day;

(c) if so, the action taken by Government to prevent the narcotics trade in Delhi and other parts of the country;

(d) whether it is a fact that the chemical required for the manufacture of heroin/narcotics is being smuggled out of the country from Delhi; and

(e) if so, the steps taken by Government to prevent smuggling of the said chemical?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM):(a) to (c) It is not correct that Narcotics trade in Delhi has risen repidly or that 25-30 kg of heroin is entering Delhi every day. However, all the enforcement agencies maintain the utmost vigil under the stringent provisions contained in Ndps Act. Training is being imparted to officers and vehicles and communication equipments have been provided. Reward scheme for informers and enforcement officers is being implemented zealously.

As per information available, there is no major manufactuer of the chemical located within Delhi. One major case of attempted smuggling of Acetic Anhydride was detected at IGI Airport at New Delhi, in 1996.

Major steps include taking industry and manufacturers into confidence by interaction with them and evolving strategies through workshops, seminars and coordination of enforcement activities of law enforcement agencies.

Further, Acetic Anhydride has been declared a controlled substance in 1993 leading to close monitoring of movement of the aforesaid chemical.

Removal of Import Restrictions Through W.T.O.

*82. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA:
DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that some countries are insisting on India, through World Trade Organisation or otherwise, to remove import restrictions on many consumer/farm products;

(b) if so, names of the countries, categories of goods and nature of restrictions sought to be removed, including the rationale thereof;

(c) the strategy of Indian Government to protect domestic industry against such moves;

(d) whether there are visible/invisible import restrictions in such countries particularly in U.S.A. and Japan and whether any study has been made in this regard; and

(e) if so, the details thereof, and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULI): (a) to (e) Article XI of the General Agreement of Tariffs and Trade (GATT) 1994 provides that no prohibitions or restrictions other than duties, taxes or charges, whether made effective through quotas, import or export licences or other measures shall be maintained by any Member of the World Trade Organisation (WTO). However, under the exceptional provisions of Article XVIII of the GATT, India has some residual quantitative restrictions on imports maintained for balance of payments purposes. In May 1997. India has presented to the WTO a plan for the elimination of these restrictions on imports, including those on farm goods and consumer goods. This plan was considered at the consultations with India of the WTO Committee on Balance of Payments Restrictions in June-July 1997, when noting the divergence of opinion among WTO Members on, inter alia, the length of the plan, it was agreed to conclude the consultations.

Subsequently, six WTO Members, namely, Australia, Canada, the European communities, New Zealand, Switzerland and the United States of America, requested consultations with India under Article XXII of GATT 1994 and the Understanding on Rules and Procedures Governing the Settlement of Disputes (DSU). During these consultations, understanding has been reached with Australia, Canada, the EC, New Zealand and Switzerland in respect of the time-schedules for the elimination of residual quantitative restrictions on imports maintained for balance of payments purposes. Negotations towards a similar understanding with Japan, which has third party interest in each of these disputes, are in an advanced stage. At the request of the USA, a panel has been constituted on 18 November 1997 to examine the US allegation that the continued maintenance of quantitative restrictions on imports by India is inconsistent with India's obligations under the WTO Agreement.

These restrictions are proposed to be eliminated in a phased manner so that the interest of the domestic industry are protected. Simulatancously, efforts are being made to improve productivity of Indian Industry and to enhance overall competitiveness. Safeguard measures to protect domestic production, such as protectin through tariffs, anti-dumping measures, countervailing measures to offset the effect of unjustifiable subsidies and safeguard measures to prevent damage to domestic duction because of surgein imports, are proposed to be utilised effectively. Non-tariff barriers in countries for products of export interest to India are being taken up bilaterally or